

REMARKS

The Examiner has asserted a Restriction Requirement under 35 U.S.C. §§121 and 372, requiring restriction of the application to one of the following claim groups:

- Group I including claims 70-81;
- Group II including claims 82-94;
- Group III including claims 95-108;
- Group IV including claims 109, 112, 120, and 122;
- Group V including claims 110, 111, 113-119, 121, and 123;
- Group VI including claims 124-142;
- Group VII including claims 143-145; and
- Group VIII including claims 146-148.

The Examiner alleges that the inventions of Groups I-VIII do not relate to a single general inventive concept (citing PCT Rule 13.1). The Examiner alleges that the inventions of Groups I-VIII lack the same or corresponding special technical features and further specifies each alleged special technical feature of each group of claims.

Although Applicant disagrees with the Examiner that Groups I-VIII are distinct inventions, Applicant hereby elects Group VI including claims 124-142 for prosecution in this application. Applicant has elected Group VI in order to expedite prosecution of this application, so that claims 70-123 and 143-148 have been cancelled without disclaimer or prejudice. Claims 124-142 (2 independent claim and 18 total claims) remain pending in the application. The foregoing amendment conforms this application to the restriction requirement contained in the Office Action dated March 9, 2004. The foregoing election is made without waiver, estoppel, or prejudice to the filing of one or more related applications directed to the subject matter of the non-elected claims.

The undersigned would welcome a telephone call at the telephone number listed below if such would advance prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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